



Herbert J.C. Kouts

December 18, 1919 - January 7, 2008

Dr. Kouts, who held a Doctorate in Physics from Princeton University, was nominated by the President of the United States to be one of the charter Members of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board and was sworn into office in October 1989. He retired in January 2000 after more than 50 years of service to the United States Government. During his tenure with the Board, Dr. Kouts was key to achieving the Board's mission during the Board's safety reviews of the K-Reactor at the Savannah River Site, the Advanced Test Reactor at Idaho National Environmental and Engineering Laboratory, and the several test reactors operated for the Department of Energy at various sites. He not only led many of these reviews but also served as mentor and teacher to many young engineers here at the Board.

He began his career in 1950, when he joined Brookhaven National Laboratory where he personally led research groups in nuclear reactor shielding and reactor physics. In 1968, he founded the Technical Support Organization, a "think tank" for nuclear materials safeguards.

In 1973, Dr. Kouts was selected as Director of Reactor Safety Research for the Atomic Energy Commission - responsible for pioneering research on key issues such as loss of coolant accidents and emergency core cooling. From 1975 to 1976, he continued his research leadership as the Director of Nuclear Regulatory Research in the newly formed Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Returning to Brookhaven, Dr. Kouts then took over direction of the International Safeguards Project Office for two years. For over a decade he was the Chairman of the Department of Nuclear Energy, relinquishing the position in 1988; however, he remained a Senior Physicist at Brookhaven until officially nominated by the President to be a member of the newly formed Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board. During this time he chaired a peer review on quantitative uncertainty analysis for the seminal report NUREG-1150, Severe Accident Risks: An Assessment for Five U.S. Nuclear Power Plants.

Dr. Kouts received many awards for his distinguished and significant scientific contributions including in 1963 the Atomic Energy Commission's E. O. Lawrence Award for the development of new experimental techniques in reactor physics and their applications to a better understanding of theoretical models of chain-reacting systems. In 1999, he was awarded the Secretary of Energy's Gold Medal Award in recognition of his forty-nine years of singularly effective leadership in promoting nuclear safety and the vision he offered the U.S. Department of Energy for integrating safety into all aspects of its work. His remarkable and unprecedented achievements in nuclear physics, safeguards, and safety changed and defined the national and international policies and requirements for energy and national security. In 1983 he was awarded the Tommy Thompson Award by the American Nuclear Society (ANS) for outstanding contributions to the field of nuclear reactor safety; and in 2005, ANS awarded him the George C. Laurence Pioneering Award for service to his country and his fellow man for over half a century through his passion for science and his devotion to the application of safety principles to commercial nuclear power and defense nuclear facilities.

He served on numerous advisory committees and panels, including the statutory Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards. He was a member and chairman of the International Nuclear Safety Advisory Group to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency on nuclear safety matters. In addition, he was a member of the Nuclear Power Advisory Group, advising the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development on activities of the Bank concerning nuclear plants in Eastern Europe, particularly the safety aspects.

During his illustrious career, Dr. Kouts authored (and coauthored) several score of articles, speeches, and research papers covering topics in nuclear materials research and development, international safeguards, and reactor safety.